



NEW BEGINNINGS . . .

a newsletter dedicated to the pregnant family.

No. 4

Weeks 26-30 of Pregnancy

Physical Changes and Concerns

You are now entering the final third of the pregnancy. Your baby is continuing to grow in size. With this, some minor physical discomforts may be noticed. You may also notice some emotional changes. If you haven't already done so, now is the time to start planning for your baby's arrival.

This newsletter will help you begin to identify areas of preparation needed. It will also give information on other changes and concerns.

Physical Changes and Concerns

Stretch Marks (Striae*)

Due to:

- stretching of the skin over the abdomen and breasts
- increased levels of hormones

Prevention and Relief Measures:

- *gradual* weight gain
- lanolin or cocoa butter may or may not help (there are **no** miracle creams!)

*Stretch marks may or may not occur. They may affect the way you feel about your body. Talk about your concerns with your partner. They will fade with time after pregnancy.

Vaginal Itching

Due to:

- increased perspiration
- changes in the normal vaginal discharge

Prevention and Relief Measures:

- wear cotton underwear
- wear loose clothing to decrease perspiration
- bathe daily
- avoid douching
- avoid scratching
- avoid perfumed soaps and bubble baths

Difficulty Breathing

Due to:

- increased hormones which affects breathing
- pressure of the growing uterus on the lung area
- increased swelling of the tissue inside the nose

Prevention and Relief Measures:

- good posture
- do reaching exercises to help the lungs take in more air
- use two or more pillows for sleeping at night
- This is a normal occurrence. Breathing will improve when the baby "drops" or lowers into the pelvis

Hemorrhoids

Due to:

- pressure from the growing uterus
- possibility of constipation in pregnancy

Prevention and Relief Measures:

- avoid constipation
- increase fluids
- warm liquids in the morning
- eat foods containing roughage (raw fruits, vegetables and wheat bran)
- keep regular bowel habits
- avoid laxatives
- sit in a tub of warm water
- ice packs to help reduce pain and swelling
- witch hazel packs to help reduce swelling
- Kegel exercises
- topical ointments
- When trying to have a bowel movement, place feet on a stool 10-12 inches high. Take two deep breaths. Exhale while pushing.

Heartburn

Due to:

- Pressure on the stomach from the growing uterus

Prevention and Relief Measures:

- eat small frequent meals
- decrease fat intake
- limit amount of liquids **with meals** (drink your liquids between meals)
- avoid very cold foods
- good posture (it gives the stomach more room)
- do not lie down immediately after eating (if you rest after a meal, sit in a chair with your feet up)

Feeding Your Baby

Have you thought about how you will feed your baby? Don't pass this subject off lightly. Discuss your feelings with your partner. Many women are surprised that their partner has different views. This decision needs to be based on what is right for both of you. Discuss how you **feel** about each method. Don't let well meaning friends and relatives convince you to use a method you won't be happy with.

This issue we will discuss breastfeeding. The next issue we will cover bottle feeding.

Common Fears about Breastfeeding

- **"I won't have enough milk"**
Breastfeeding works on "supply and demand". You will produce what your baby needs.
- **"My breasts are too small"**
The size of your breasts has nothing to do with milk production.
- **"If I breastfeed, my diet will be too restricted"**
Many women do not have to restrict their diets. Each baby responds to foods differently. Watch your own baby and see how he responds to your diet. Each baby is different.
- **"It will tie me down"**
Breastfeeding is a change for a woman who has been free and independent. Motherhood changes one's lifestyle. Once breastfeeding is established, someone else can give your baby a bottle of breast milk or formula when you need to be away.
- **"It will make a sissy out of my baby boy"**
Your son will need as much love and nourishment as a daughter.
- **"My breasts will sag"**
Breastfeeding does not cause sagging. Changes in breasts appearance result from heredity, age, and weight.
- **"If my wife breastfeeds, I can't be involved with the baby"**
Fathers can provide a relief bottle when mom is unavailable. This can be breast milk that mom has pumped or expressed. He can also be involved in every other aspect of his child's care.

Negative reasons for breastfeeding are those things seen by the mother as being an inconvenience to her. There are no known disadvantages for the normal infant.

Facts about Breast Milk And Breastfeeding

- **breast milk contains vitamins and nutrients needed for your baby**
- **breast milk is the least allergenic of any infant feeding**
- **breast milk is easily digested by the newborn – therefore usually requires feeding every 2-3 hours.**
- **breast milk is high in unsaturated fats**
- **breast milk is always fresh and at the correct temperature**
- **breast feeding promotes good jaw and tooth development**
- **breastfeeding decreases respiratory and digestive infections**
- **breastfeeding needs no special equipment**
- **breastfeeding helps your body return to your pre-pregnant figure**
- **breastfeeding forms sense of security and trust in your baby**
- **breastfeeding fosters a special closeness**

Breast Care

- Use only water to cleanse the breasts and nipples.
- Do not use soap or rubbing alcohol.
- Natural secretions keep the nipple clean and soft.
- Wear a clean well-fitting bra. Remember: **No Plastic Liners.**

No nipple preparation is needed.

In the past, women were told to "toughen" their nipples. This has not proven helpful. In fact, problems may occur.

Flat or Inverted Nipples.

If you have flat or inverted nipples, special inserts can be worn inside the bra during the last several weeks of pregnancy. These inserts help bring the nipple out. Some babies have no trouble with flat or inverted nipples.



Nutrition and Physical Activity

Overweight Moms

There are special concerns about weight gain in the pregnant woman who is overweight. **Pregnancy is not a time for dieting.** Dieting during pregnancy can do harm to you and your unborn baby. Eat a well balanced diet as outlined in the first newsletter. This diet will help supply the needed calories and nutrients necessary for a healthy mom and baby. Expect to gain the normal amount of weight for your pregnancy.

Exercise

Exercise is necessary. Exercise can continue throughout a normal pregnancy. Check with your health care provider. Walking is a good way to exercise during pregnancy.

Family Relationships

Financial concerns

Most people express concern for their financial situation during this time. Plans are being made for an additional member of the family. If the mother is working outside the home, there may be a period of unemployment. The length of time varies according to several factors. These are family need, employer's policies, and family values.

Many times men feel a need to increase security by buying more life insurance, working overtime, or taking an extra job. This may increase stress. Discuss your options with each other.

Parent-Child Relationships

Daydreaming about the unborn infant is common. It is part of preparing for the baby. Daydreams often include fantasies about what the child will look like...what kind of parent you will be...how you will react to being awakened at night...what the future holds for your child.

Mothers will find differences in how they feel with a first child or second child. The first time mother is concerned about being a good mother. The second time mother fears she won't have enough love for two children.

Education

Preparation for the birth of your infant is very important. This preparation includes getting supplies together for the baby. It also means preparing for labor, delivery and care of the baby.

There are several types of classes you can attend. Prenatal, childbirth, Lamaze and parenting classes may be offered. The classes give new information for first time parents. There are a good review for those who

Continued on the back page

NEW BEGINNINGS . . .

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already have children. Check with your local hospital or health care provider for details. Don't wait! Register now!

Caesarean Birth

Caesarean birth is the birth of your baby through an incision in your abdomen and uterus. If you are expecting a caesarean birth, check in your community for caesarean birth classes. If these classes are not offered, attend the prenatal or Lamaze classes. They will provide a vast amount of valuable information about pregnancy, birth and care of your infant.

Emotional Changes

The third trimester brings a sense of pride. It also may bring anxiety. As your abdomen grows, you may find others eager to offer you a chair...or help with packages. You may need this help...you may enjoy it...or you may feel others see you as helpless.

During the last three months, physical discomforts increase. Rest is a must. You wonder if your due date is correct. You make final plans for the baby. You may spend hours thinking about names.

Growth and Development

(28 weeks)



- about 14 inches long and 2 ½ pounds
- fingernails and toenails appear
- eyelids open
- nervous system is starting to direct some body functions

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



Health Resources and Services Administration
Maternal and Child Health Bureau

